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## Ricky Raccoon

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## Ricky Raccoon

*Mandel Ilagan*

I have here a tale which will leave you laughin', cryin', thinkn', and wonderin' if a tale this ridiculous could ever be true! Clinton vowed not to run for re-election, and the parties are struggling to find the perfect candidates. However, both parties would face their toughest challenge ever...from a raccoon that hailed from the Appalachians: Ricky Raccoon. He was no ordinary raccoon. He was a mutant, born near that abandoned nuclear plant in Chattanooga. He grew six feet tall and learned to talk! This started back in June 1996 when Ricky was spotted by these two tourists, Mildred and Marvin Bradley, while doin' his foragin' in Butterball Park. Well, he just scared the heebee-jeebees out of them. Ricky finally convinced the Bradleys that he was a kind, gentle mutant raccoon.

This started the ball rolling. Ricky made the tabloids and hit the talk show circuit giving his views on the national debt, as well as a few vegetarian cooking tips. His big break, however, came on Franklin Joe Live, America's favorite call-in show. There, he announced his candidacy for the 1996 presidential election. Volunteers poured in to help his seeding party: The Acorn Union.

Press conferences were held. Ricky handled them beautifully. A lady from USA Today asked, "Do you think that our country should enter the

Eastern Switzerland war?"

Ricky, drawing from his past, said, "Now, being a forest dweller, I've witnessed many battles in the forest between rabbit factions and I've learned from them: don't get involved. There's nothing worse than an angry, testy rabbit unless you're considering a Punky Brewster reunion. Seriously, I would sacrifice that oh-so-good Swiss Miss pudding through embargoes."

A Rolling Stone reporter then asked, "Mr. Raccoon, is it true that you were involved in a duel with a man named Danny because he stole your girl whose name was Magill, who called herself Lil', but everyone knew her as Nancy?"

Ricky answered, "No, that's Rocky, my second cousin, once removed."

Soon, the polls showed support for Ricky by a third of all voters. It was exactly one week before the November election. Ricky was only a few percentage points away from getting the majority's support. He was to face the other candidates in a nationally televised debate.

The moderator began by saying, "Welcome to this, the first debate for the '96 presidential election with Republican Alfred Richfield, Acorn Unionist Ricky Raccoon, and Democrat J.P. Mackensie. We'll begin the questioning with you, Mr. Richfield. Senator, how do you plan to prevent poverty from spreading throughout the country?"

Richfield said, "It's simple. Big tax means no max. No max leaves workers lax..."

This was the kind of thing that Ricky just hated. He despised cute little rhymes and catch phrases. He immediately interrupted by saying, "You've got to be kidding. I cannot stand here and let Mr. Richfield trick America with his these little sound bites. If you want a better life, you have to sacrifice. It's going to take hard work. I made my home in the forest with my bare hands. I didn't need any silly sing-song..."

Then came the bomb. I never thought that these sly politicians would do it, but they did. Mackensie said, "I bet it took hard work to bite that man in '83!"

The audience gasped. Ricky, in shock, responded, "What in Bullwinkle's name are you talking about?"

Mackensie, relishing the discovery, said, "According to a USA Today report, you bit a man near your dwellings in April 1983. It also goes on to say that the man had to be treated for rabies!"

Ricky, beginning to lose his composure, asked, "Do you actually believe a newspaper whose main features include cute little piecharts describing the annual consumption of Twinkies in the world? I haven't seen this much mudslinging since I lived next to those beavers on Hartford bank!"

Nobody laughed. His fur began to stand up, a sure sign of nervousness. He had to face the truth. "All right," said Ricky, "I admit that I had an encounter with the man that you mentioned, but I did NOT bite down!"

Richfield said, "Oh, so you admit it?"

"I said that I DID NOT BITE DOWN! I DID NOT..."

Ricky then lost it and lunged at Richfield. With that, the debate ended, and so did Ricky's chances of becoming president. Despite suffering shock and a ripped tie from the attack, Richfield won the election by a landslide. What happened to Ricky? Well, our furry friend was immediately detained, and many called for Ricky to be put to sleep. Fortunately, protests by the Acorn Union and Bob Barker saved Ricky. Eventually, things turned out well. He got his own radio show and had his life portrayed by Ed Asner in a new Andrew Lloyd Weber musical.